

SOUTH SHORE BIKES ON TRAINS STUDY

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Northwestern Indiana
Regional Planning Commission
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BIKES ON TRAINS STUDY

- Project Summary
- Project Team
- Project Context
- Project Scope
- Tasks Completed
 - Case Study Review
 - NICTD Facility Review
 - Rider Survey
- Tasks Ahead



PROJECT SUMMARY

- Engineering study
- Assesses the feasibility of accommodating bicycles on NICTD trains
- Analyzes
 - Interior car layout
 - Service scheduling
 - Platform configuration
 - Profile of prospective user
 - Financing program

PROJECT TEAM

NIRPC Project Management		
Belinda Petroskey	Transit Planner	NIRPC
Consultant Team		
Dan Schulte	Project Manager	
Bill Otter	Rail Operations Specialist	Quandel Consultants
Bob Moore	Principal	
Ben Spears	Rail Engineer	LTK Engineering
Matti McCormick	CEO/President	McCormick Group
Project Advisory Committee		
John Parsons	Marketing Director	NICTD
Nicole Barker	Executive Director	Save the Dunes
LeAaron Foley	Senior Outreach Coordinator	NPCA
Geof Benson	Town Council President	Town of Beverly Shores
Jan Dick	Councilman	City of Valparaiso
Dave Shafer	Clerk-Treasurer	Town of Munster

PROJECT CONTEXT

- Currently only folding bikes allowed on NICTD trains
- Massive disagreement between bike advocates and rail operators on how to implement this program for years



BIKE ADVOCATE PERSPECTIVE

- Tremendous demand for bikes on trains service
- Expanding riders and trail network
- Metra allows bikes on trains
 - NICTD is 1 of only 3 commuter railroads in the country that don't allow bikes onboard
 - 21 other US commuter railroads do
- Why I can't I just squeeze my bike between the seats!

EXPANDING RIDERS & TRAILS

Lakefront Path



Dunes Kankakee Trail



Bike the Drive



Tour de Shore



RAILROAD PERSPECTIVE

- This will lower quality of our service
 - Longer boarding and alighting times
 - More trains behind schedule
 - More crowded cars
 - Greater hassle to existing riders
- Cutting travel times is our #1 priority
- Little money or time to focus on this issue
- NICTD's system is unique from many other commuter railroads

COMPLICATING RAIL FACTORS

Kensington Chokepoint



Close Car Quarters



Boarding issues



Limited Capital Dollars



STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS

- Advocates recognized challenges, NICTD recognized market opportunities
- Outside consultant study was needed to determine how a bikes on trains program could work in NICTD's system
- NIRPC was deemed to be best to serve as the lead agency for the project
- \$150,000-200,000 was targeted as the amount needed for a substantive study

PROJECT FUNDRAISING

Federal Match (80%)	Amount
Federal Transit Administration Grants (via NIRPC) Urbanized Area Formula Program (5307)	\$164,000
Local Match (20%)	Amount
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD)	5,000
Arcelor Mittal USA	10,000
Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO)	4,000
Porter County	5,000
LaPorte County	5,000
Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)	5,000
Greenways Foundation	2,000
National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)	5,000
LOCAL MATCH TOTAL	\$41,000
TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING	\$205,000

PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

- RFP Released (June 2014)
- Scope of Work Included:
 - Case Study Review
 - Inventory of NICTD's Assets
 - Assessment of Implementation Barriers
 - Review of Different Alternatives
 - Identified Preferred Alternative
 - Identified Capital Financing Strategies

CONSULTANT TEAM

- Consultant Team Selected (August 2014):
 - Quandel Consultants (Chicago, IL)
 - Commuter rail engineering
 - Rail operations
 - LTK Engineering (Philadelphia, PA)
 - Rail car design
 - McCormick Group (Chicago, IL)
 - Public outreach

PROJECT TASK TIMELINE

Task	Period of Work	Completed
Case Study Review	September – November 2014	Yes
NICTD Inventory	October – December 2014	
Potential User Survey	January – February 2015	Underway
Barrier Assessment	December 2014 – April 2015	
Alternatives Analysis	April – June 2015	
Selected Alternative	June – July 2015	
Public Meetings Period	July-August 2015	No
Draft Report Completed		

CASE STUDY REVIEW

- 24 commuter railroads reviewed based on:
 - Age and style of rolling stock and stations
 - Characteristics of the market
 - Operational characteristics
 - Qualities of operator's bikes on trains program
- **Goal:** Identify systems that are most similar to NICTD

THE CLOSEST MATCH

▪ New Jersey Transit

- Similar type and size of service market
 - Interstate, two-hours in length
 - Covers a major downtown, industrial areas, beaches, airport, casinos, suburbs
- Similar electrified diesel locomotives
- Mix of single and multi-level cars
- Cut-and-add operating system
- Must share track with other passenger lines
- **Selected for a Columbus Day Site Visit**

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT SITE VISIT



Long Branch Line
 October 2014
 Met with NJT Operating Staff
 Chronicled Rider Experience

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT FINDINGS

- Bikes on Trains program started in 1990
- Only allowed on reverse peak, non-peak, and weekend service
- Bikes attached to ADA flip seats
- Must be tied down
- Accommodation was made through designs of new multi-level cars and ADA-retrofits to old cars

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT FINDINGS

- Up to 12 bikes per train
- Established a Bike Advocate staff position for the Customer Service Dept. to serve as a liaison to bike groups
- Moving bikes through trains cars can be hard, but most bikers know the drill
- Instilling "bike friendliness" in NJT train crews took time
- Publishing a clear policy was more effective than requiring permits

NICTD SITE VISIT

- November 2014
- Quandel & LTK assess design of NICTD's 3 different car layouts
- Maneuver bicycles through cars
- Tested how bicycles fit into different configurations



NICTD SITE VISIT



NICTD SITE VISIT



BIKES ON TRAINS SURVEY

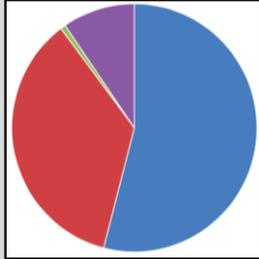
- **Goal:** Identify the profile of likely users of the service so as to best tailor the service to them
- **Variables:**
 - Major Origin-Destination stations
 - Purpose of trip
 - Typical size of groups
 - Periods of greatest demand for service

BIKES ON TRAINS SURVEY

- Open from February 9-20, 2015
- Nearly 1,500 responses
- **Key Findings from Respondents:**
 - 91% would use Bikes on Trains service
 - Service primarily used April-October
 - 1-12 round trips per average potential rider
 - Primary interest was for recreational trips
 - Service would attract users who don't frequently ride NICTD

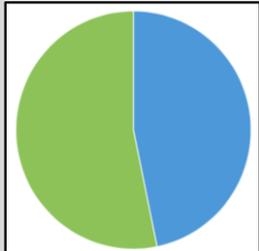
MOSTLY RECREATIONAL DEMAND

- 54%: Only for recreation trips
- 36%: Mix of work & recreation trips
- 10%: Would not use service
- <1%: Only for work trips



NICTD WOULD ATTRACT NEW RIDERS

- 47%: Of potential recreation riders currently ride NICTD frequently
- 53%: Of potential recreation riders don't currently ride NICTD frequently

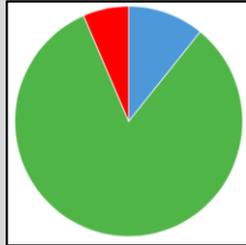


3 MAIN BIKE TRIP GENERATING AREAS

- **Downtown Chicago**
 - Millennium Station – #1 trip generator overall
 - Museum Campus
- **Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore stations**
 - Dune Park (Chesterton) – #2 trip generator overall
 - Portage/Ogden Dunes
 - Beverly Shores
 - Miller (Gary)
 - 11th Street & Carroll Ave (Michigan City)
- **South Bend**
 - South Bend Airport – #3 trip generator overall

MOST RIDERS WITH SMALL GROUPS

- 83%: Of potential riders in groups of 2-5 people
- 11%: Of potential riders in groups of 5+ people
- 6%: Of potential riders travel alone



TASKS AHEAD

- Complete assessment of barriers
- Analyze different alternatives
- Select a preferred alternative
- Identify a financing program
- Present alternative to public and field input
- Complete report by August 2015

IF SERVICE IS IMPLEMENTED:

- It will likely be on off-peak, reverse peak, weekend trains
- It will likely be a permanent versus a pilot program
- It will more likely be allowed at high-level platform stations
- It will be market-driven



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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